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ABSTRACT

The data for this report was taken from the student Request for Permission to Take a Course Elsewhere Form, which must include the reason for taking the course at another institution. Towson State College, Baltimore Community College, and the Catonsville Community College were the main choices of institutions which attracted the students to their summer sessions. They tended to attract mostly freshmen and sophomore students. The most frequently cited reasons for taking courses elsewhere was "Close to home" and "It is not being offered at UMBC this summer." Although the cost of taking a summer course was cited frequently, most of the freshmen and sophomores attended cheaper credit-hour institutions that were close to home and offered courses after working hours. There was an overall tendency to take courses in one's own major field, except for the large numbers of Mathematics and Humanities majors taking Psychology and Education courses, respectively. The freshmen and sophomores tended to remain in their majors while the juniors and seniors tended to roam from their majors. (Author)

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ANALYSIS OF REASONS FOR TAKING COURSES ELSEWHERE IN SUMMER SESSION 1972 BY UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND BALTIMORE COUNTY STUDENTS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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STUDY DESIGN

The data was extracted from the letter of permission file for summer 1973. The 424 course-cases represent 197 students who took one or more courses or cited one or more reasons for taking courses at another institution. Where the data was illegible or missing the case was excluded from that table only.

DISCUSSION OF THE DATA

1. Declared Major or Career Goal

90% of the declared majors attended a public institution. Of the majors attending community colleges, 128% were in Nursing, 13% were in Health pre-professions, 6% in Psychology, 4% in Sociology, and 30% had declared no major. Although 42% attended community colleges and 41% attended state colleges, the top 5 majors changed at the state college level (15% Nursing, 15% Psychology, 16% Health pre-professional, 9% Math, and 9% Sociology). At the university level the pattern of majors shifts again (17% Psychology, 17% Sociology, 9% History, and 7% American Studies). It is significant that the declared major prevalent at all types of institutions include Psychology and Sociology.

At least 9 institutions had 10 or more of our students enrolled in their courses and this accounted for 83% of the courses taken. In addition, 10% were in out-of-state or foreign schools. The remaining 7% attended 11 schools which had fewer than 10 students in each school. Of the 9 schools Towson (31%) had 17% who were Nursing majors, 12% Psychology, and 10% in Mathematics. Baltimore Community College (with 24%) had 30% in Nursing and 10% in Mathematics. Catonsville Community College (with 8%) had 19% in Dental Technology and 13% in History. At Essex Community College 24% of those who attended were Nursing majors and 19% were Physical Therapy majors. At Salisbury State College 43% were Dental Tech. majors and another 56% was equally divided among Pharmacy and History majors. Note that the majors comprising the largest segment of students were not 4 year UMBC majors with the exception of Mathematics and Psychology.

Of those who took courses elsewhere, some also took courses at UMBC during the summer term. 23% of the American Studies majors, 20% of the Economics majors, and 21% of the History majors. Very few of the Health professional majors were at the junior or senior level. In the Social Sciences, 97% of the Sociology majors were juniors or seniors, 79% in Psychology, and 50% in Political Science, and 79% in History. Among Science Division majors 50% of the Biology majors were at the junior or senior level. Among Mathematics majors, 76% of the students were at the junior or senior level and in Physics 67%. Among Humanities Division majors; 100% of American Studies, English and German majors were at the junior or senior level. Of those students with less than 30 hours remaining to be earned for the B.A., 57% of the English majors were in this group and 74% of the History majors.

Among the majors who had more than 15 students enrolled elsewhere (9 majors) their greatest course selection was as follows:

Majors:		Dept:		
	Biology		Chemistry	25%
	Chemistry		English	57%
	Math		Math	56%
	Physics		Math	83%
	Nursing		Chemistry	37%
	Health Prof.		Chemistry	42%
	History		Physical Ed.	37%
	Psychology		Psychology	36%
	Sociology		Sociology	38%

The 6 most frequently cited reasons (90%) for taking courses elsewhere were as follows:

25% Taken at a school close to home
24% The course was not offered at UMBC
12% The course is cheaper elsewhere
11% Taken elsewhere in evening sessions
10% To lighten my future load at UMBC
8% To complete a UMBC requirement

Note that only 2% of the students went elsewhere as a result of our cancellation of a scheduled summer term course.

A tentative hypothesis for the preceding 3 variables would indicate that we do not offer enough junior or senior level courses for our majors. However, a look at our 9 largest major groups indicates the following:

Biology	Not offered at UMBC	38%
Chemistry	Close to home	57%
Math	Not offered a UMBC	32%
Physics	" " " "	83%
Nursing	Close to home	24%
Health	Not offered at UMBC	30%
History	Close to home	42%
Psychology	Not offered at UMBC	23%
Sociology	" " " "	38%

Only in the health professions did the relative cost of the course play a major role in the students selection of the place where he would take the course. The obvious predominance of "not offered at UMBC summer session" indicates an inability to offer the student desired courses with the available summer faculty.

2. Level of School

If the students are taking essential courses which we do not offer in the UMBC summer session; in which departments and at what level are they taking them elsewhere: 42% of these courses were taken at the community college level and on those departments which had more than 10 students the rates were as follows:

English	Community College	56%
Math	State College	61%
Physics	" "	67%
Biology	" "	47%
Chemistry	Community College	60%
Psychology	" "	59%
Sociology	" "	53%

When you examine the level at which they were taken by the Division in which they were taken a much clearer pattern appears:

Science	Community College	54%
Humanities	State College	53%
Social Science	" "	48%
Math/Physics	" "	61%

In the examination of the reasons for taking the course by the level at which the course was taken, it is clear that the predominate reasons for taking courses at the community college were: cheaper 86%, close to home 51%, and taken after work hours 37%.

Baltimore city has an abundance of higher education institutions: public and private. Over 95% of our current student population come from the Baltimore area. The latest annual report by the Maryland Council for Higher Education indicates that the number of part-time students is increasing at a faster rate than full-time students. Almost 60% of our current student body receives some form of financial assistance during the regular session. The majority of our students must work during all the special sessions to earn tuition expenses. Therefore, the course cost, the time of day that it's offered and the actual course needs of the students dictate their participation in the special session.

3. School Attended Elsewhere

Over 75% of the students attended day sessions. Only at UM University College and Johns Hopkins did the students attend night school in significant amounts. Those same students also took 1 or more courses at UMBC during the day. At Towson 60% of the students were juniors or seniors, at Baltimore Community College 75% were freshmen-sophomores, at Catonsville Community College 66% were freshmen-sophomores. These 3 schools had over 50% of all the students. 12% of students (50) were in their last 30 hours at UMBC. There is a rule against taking more than 6 hours elsewhere during your last 30 hours at UMBC. However, if they were not exceptions it may indicate an inability to get a needed course at UMBC during the session.

4. Session in Which the Course was Taken

Over 75% of the students took a course elsewhere during the day. But they took significant (more than 10) numbers of courses at night in the following departments: English 34%, Math 44%, Psychology 41%, and Sociology 26%.

5. Hours Taken at UMBC

None of the freshmen took a course at UMBC while taking their courses elsewhere. 96% of the Science majors and 94% of the Math majors were also in this group. 26% of those students who said the course was easier elsewhere also took 1 course at UMBC.

6. Classification

62% of the students who said that they took the course elsewhere because it was not offered at UMBC were junior-seniors and of those who said the UMBC course was full 62% were freshmen. The most frequently cited reasons by class year is as follows:

Freshman	Close to home	28%	Cheaper	17%
Sophomore	" " "	35%	Not at UMBC	17%
Junior	Not at UMBC	40%	Close to home	15%
Senior	" " "	22%	" " "	20%
	Conflict with work	22%		

7. Over 60 Hours Completed

34% of the students had completed over 60 hours at UMBC by the start of the session. The departments in which they took the courses reflected the different needs of the students at their level in their academic careers:

English	91%	less than 60
Math	52%	more than 60
Physics	57%	" " "
Biology	81%	less than 60
Chemistry	83%	" " "
Economics	80%	" " "
Psychology	76%	" " "
Sociology	71%	" " "

However, the divisional majors of those students reflects that only in the Science Division were the students predominantly lower classmen:

Science	80%	less than 60
Social Science	64%	more than 60
Math/Physics	52%	" " "
Humanities	60%	" " "

This indicates that there is a different need for some divisional courses by upper or lower level students. The reason for taking courses most frequently cited by those with less than 60 hours was "close to home" 28%; with more than 60 hours was "not offered at UMBC" 35%.

8. In Last 30 Hours

The most frequently cited department for students in their last 30 hours was Math 16%. However, 62% of all students in their last 30 hours were Social Science majors. These two findings indicate that the upper level activities in some departments may be caused by members of other divisions. The most frequently cited reason for taking a course elsewhere by the last 30 group was "not offered at UMBC" 24%.

9. Department in Which the Course was Taken

An examination of the highest departments in which the major took courses indicate the following:

Science Division Majors	Chem.	30%	Biol.	18%
Humanities " "	Educ.	20%	Span.	13%
Social Science Division Majors	Psych.	20%	Socy.	15%
Mathematics " "	Math.	61%	Psych.	32%
Undeclared Majors	Psych.	20%	Socy.	15%

Only in Humanities and Mathematics was there a significant number of majors taking courses unrelated to their majors. The most frequently cited reason in those departments which had more than 20 of our students was as follows:

English	Close to home	28%
Math	Not offered at UMBC	26%
Physics	" " " "	43%
Biology	" " " "	39%
Chemistry	" " " "	30%
Psychology	Close to home	41%
Sociology	" " "	32%

However, at least 50% of all UMBC declared majors took courses in their same division. The most frequently cited reason by each of divisional majors was "not offered at UMBC" 25% to 40% of the time.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The data strongly suggests that we could have met the special session needs of the students with a different approach to the methods of selecting course offerings. The historical tradition of special summer session has come from the viewpoint of meeting the income needs of the faculty and not the academic needs of the students.

Two viable alternatives exist to move away from this view of special sessions. Option 1: At spring preregistration students fill out a form indicating their choice of courses to be offered in the summer session and indicate their major and the reason for their selection of that course. Option 2: Mail a questionnaire to all non-graduating students who are majors in the departments which have had the previous summers highest number of students taking courses elsewhere. The questionnaire asks the same kind of questions which are asked in Option 1. Option 3: Request from the Office of Admissions and Registrations an analysis of the unmet academic needs of the students who tried to register for full courses in the past year. Require that students who wish to be put on "waiting lists" of closed courses complete a form which indicates their major and whether the course is an elective or required for them.

There are several additional options which we could use which were pioneered at Indiana University, Purdue University, and the University of Texas, Houston but they all require a more highly sophisticated, automated registration. Their system analyzed spring-fall preregistration by students who take courses by those who take courses for electives or to meet major requirements.

Special sessions can be used as a device to decrease the unmet academic needs of students in the regular sessions. It can only do so with some analysis of the data which the 3 options provide.